



NORTHEAST IDAHO

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON, & TETON COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 3.2 percent in August was a six-tenths of a percentage point drop from July in the Bonneville Labor Market Area (LMA) as seen in Northeast Table 1. The August rate reflected an increase of 470 people in the *Civilian Labor Force* with a decrease of 510 people in total unemployed. Increases in the *Civilian Labor Force* were noted in Bonneville and Jefferson Counties while decreases in total unemployed were most noticeable in Bingham and Bonneville Counties. Bingham County showed the largest monthly decrease in unemployment rates, from 4.7 percent to 3.2 percent, as the county started into a heavy grain harvest and prepared for potato harvest. The LMA experienced a drop of one-tenth of a percentage point in the unemployment rate year-over-year, with the *Civilian Labor Force* showing an increase of 1,440 people, and total unemployed showing a decrease of 90 people. The unemployment rate of Idaho Falls, the largest city in the LMA, decreased three-tenths of a percentage point over the month, but increased two-tenths of a percentage point from August 2001.

The unemployment rate in the other counties in Northeast Idaho showed very little change from July to August with Teton County showing the largest change at five-tenths of a percentage point increase. A year-over-year comparison showed little change. Teton County showed the largest unemployment rate increase at 1.4 percentage points, while Fremont County increased six-tenths of a percentage point. Teton County, which is dependent on tourism, has shown increases in unemployment compared to 2001 as a result of the national recession and the September 11 tragedy. Lemhi County showed a decrease of eight-tenths of a percentage point from August 2001 as growth in economic development and work towards the Lewis and Clark Commemoration, set for 2003, continue. Custer

Northeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Bonneville, Bingham, Butte, and Jefferson Counties

	Aug 2002*	July 2002	Aug 2001	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	83,720	83,250	82,280	0.6	1.8
Unemployment	2,640	3,150	2,730	-16.2	-3.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.2	3.8	3.3		
Total Employment	81,080	80,100	79,550	1.2	1.9
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	84,660	83,970	83,260	0.8	1.7
Unemployment	3,410	2,740	3,570	24.5	-4.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.0	3.3	4.3		
Total Employment	81,250	81,230	79,690	0.0	2.0
JOB BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	64,150	63,960	62,750	0.3	2.2
Goods-Producing Industries	10,660	10,460	10,190	1.9	4.6
Mining & Construction	5,540	5,380	5,030	3.0	10.1
Manufacturing	5,120	5,080	5,160	0.8	-0.8
Food Processing	2,280	2,310	2,670	-1.3	-14.6
Ind. & Com. Mach. & Computer Equip.	600	590	460	1.7	30.4
All Other Manufacturing	2,240	2,180	2,030	2.8	10.3
Service-Producing Industries	53,490	53,500	52,560	0.0	1.8
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	2,310	2,300	2,420	0.4	-4.5
Wholesale Trade	5,010	5,120	5,290	-2.1	-5.3
Retail Trade	11,740	11,640	11,340	0.9	3.5
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,990	1,990	1,920	0.0	3.6
Services	22,440	22,080	21,620	1.6	3.8
Government Administration	5,680	5,610	5,710	1.2	-0.5
Government Education	4,320	4,760	4,260	-9.2	1.4
*Preliminary Estimate					
**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month					

County currently has the largest unemployment rate in Northeast Idaho at 6.3 percent while Madison County holds the lowest, for the region and state, at 1.8 percent.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs increased very little over the month—90 jobs. The most notable increases were seen in *Construction*, 160 jobs; *Retail Trade (Eating and Drinking Establishments)*, 100 jobs; and *Services*, 360 jobs. *Services* saw the increases mostly from *Business Services* and *Nonprofit Organizations*. Decreases were seen in *Wholesale Trade* as layoffs for annual maintenance were seen in many of the fresh-packing warehouses, and in *Government Education* as normally expected in the summer when school is out of session.

Year-over-year comparisons showed an increase in *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* of 1,400, with a gain of 470 in *Goods-Producing Industries* and a gain of 930 in *Service-Producing Industries*. *Construction* showed a gain of 510 jobs; *Building* and *Special Trades* showed the largest gains. *Services* showed a gain of 820, with *Business Services*, *Hotels & Other Lodging*, *Health Services* and *Social Services* showing the larger gains. An increase of 400 jobs was seen in *Retail Trade* as *Eating & Drinking Establishments* and *General Merchandise Stores*

showed large increases. The year-over-year comparison was not without decreases, as *Manufacturing (Food Processing)*; *Transportation, Communication & Utilities*; *Wholesale Trade*; and *Government Administration* showed losses.

SPECIAL TOPIC

Vehicle Sales 🚗

CARS—Reports from the Idaho Automobile Dealers Association show that new car sales for Northeast Idaho and Bingham County were down by 32 cars for August 2002 compared to August 2001. Car sales for the month of August 2002 were 114, while August 2001 showed monthly sales at 146. Year-to-date (YTD) sales show 835 cars have been sold in the area so far this year, while the same time period in 2001 showed car sales at 861. Honda is by far the best-selling car model for the area, accounting for 15.1 percent of all car purchases in the 2001 August YTD totals, and 15.8 percent of the cars in 2002 August YTD totals. Pontiac and Toyota are the next largest sellers, with Ford and Chevrolet coming in fourth and fifth, respectively.

TRUCKS—Although 308 new trucks were sold in the area in August 2002, this represented 25 fewer sales than for the same time period in 2001. Year-to-date sales for 2002 totaled 2,411, which is 308 higher than for the same time period in 2001. Top truck sellers in Northeast Idaho and Bingham County include Chevrolet at 30.2 of the total truck sales in 2002 YTD totals (729 trucks). Ford comes in second at 575 sales, followed by GMC at 450 sales, and Dodge at 286 trucks. In 2001 YTD totals, Ford came in first, selling 19 more trucks than Chevrolet. These totals do not include fleet sales.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Bonneville County

- Sabia Inc., a company that manufactures and services mineral material analyzers, celebrated with a ribbon cutting in August at its new location in the Innovation Center on Yellowstone Avenue in Idaho Falls. The company manufactures machines that give spectroscopic readouts of elements in non-homogeneous materials such as coal, phosphates, or concrete. Samples of the material are lowered into the machine, then they are bombarded by neutrons. The materials emit gamma rays that are picked up by sensors and translated into values by a computer software program. Normally, companies have to send samples of their materials to labs and wait to find out what the percentage of components are in the materials, while they continue to mine or manufacture. With this machine, companies can get immediate results from the materials they test. This gives them the edge to know before they start working what the materials consist of so they can make immediate changes if necessary. Though the \$100,000 machines may seem high-priced to the general public, they will save companies millions of dollars that currently are being paid to the sampling

labs. The machines only weigh 800 pounds compared to the traditional three- or four-story sampling towers and labs. Sabia expects to produce 100 units and expand from its current three employees to ten in 2003. The company settled in Idaho Falls for two reasons: Clinton Lingren, president and CEO of the company, and his wife are natives of the area; and the company received low-interest loans from the Regional Development Alliance and the Eastern Idaho Economic Development Council. The proximity of the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory also is a plus.

Madison County

- Brigham Young University-Idaho (BYU-I) continues to shape the future of Rexburg. The university again enjoyed a record-breaking number of registrations for its fall semester, at over 10,700 students. This is 16 percent more than last year at the same time. Students of the private, church-owned university come from all 50 states and nearly 40 foreign countries. Anticipating the increase, the university has just finished the Gordon B. Hinckley Building which will help accommodate the increased number of students. The building is 52,000-square feet and includes a chapel, gymnasium, multipurpose area, two full kitchens, and numerous classrooms. It will be dedicated on October 22. Additions to two buildings are underway to provide classrooms, advising space, and laboratory area. The second floor of the Austin Building was recently remodeled, and new classroom space and additional faculty offices will be added to the building's southeast corner. A completion date has been set for fall 2003. Thirty new faculty members have been hired for new baccalaureate programs to accommodate the increased student population and to replace retiring faculty members. This increased number of students also brings changes to Rexburg. District 7 Health Department announced an expansion to accommodate the increased number of married students and their children. Estimates indicate that the number of married students has grown from 546 in the fall of 2000 to the current 1,929, creating a need for married student housing, the construction of which currently is underway. Rexburg's newest biotech company, Collaborative Genetics, recently signed an agreement with BYU-I to hire students as interns to work in research and development for the company. Many more changes and developments are expected to arise with the growing university.

Tanya Albán, Regional Labor Economist
150 Shoup Avenue, Idaho Falls, ID 83402
(208) 542-5628
E-mail: talban@jobservice.us